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PUBLIC HEALTH REPORTS

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INFLUENZA IN SOUTH AFRICA.

Over 40 per cent of its population affected with influenza in the four months during which the epidemic raged is the record reported by the Union of South Africa in an official Blue Book just received by the United States Public Health Service.

For the 6,115,212 population this means 2,616,805 cases of influenza, and of these, 139,471 were fatal—a case mortality rate of 5.32 per cent. This is certainly a severe visitation. The case mortality rate among the European stocks was less than half that among the non-Europeans, the respective rates being 2.57 and 5.90 per cent.

In South Africa persons in the third and fourth decades of life were particularly susceptible to attack by the disease, and the death rate was also greater in these age groups. A large number of instances were also noted where the disease resulted in miscarriages. Moreover, there was a high mortality among pregnant women.

The highest death rate from the disease was in the Cape Province, where out of every thousand of population there were 33.5 deaths from influenza and its complications. The rates for Orange Free State, Transvaal, and Natal were very much lower, being 18.21, 16.24, and 11.47, respectively.

HEALTH INSURANCE, THE MEDICAL PROFESSION, AND THE PUBLIC HEALTH.

INCLUDING THE RESULTS OF A STUDY OF SICKNESS EXPECTANCY.¹

By B. S. WARREN, Assistant Surgeon General, and EDGAR SYDENSTRICKER, Public Health Statistician, United States Public Health Service.

The interest manifested by the medical profession and by health officials in the proposals for governmental health insurance in this country is as commendable as it is necessary. Any measure that may effect the quality and extent of medical service or that possesses possibilities in the prevention of disease is, it will be generally conceded, a proper subject of personal and professional concern to the physician, and a matter of vital consequence to public health administration. Health insurance—at least in some of the forms in which it has been suggested—without doubt is such a measure. In fundamental ways it proposes to modify some of the existing conditions of the practice of medicine. In a quite definite manner it promises

¹ Read at the annual meeting of the Medical and Chirurgical Faculty of Maryland at Baltimore, Apr. 25, 1917.